WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The late meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in this city, with the accompanying centennial celebration, was one of great enthusiasm, and to the ordinary observer, was a marked success. The progress of that church during the century has been great, and there is no doubt that it has been an instrument of great good to the people of this country and to mankind, and that many souls have been brought by it to the obedience of the faith. Without any desire to disparage these results, we yet feel impelled to offer a few criticisms upon the late Assembly which was devoted largely to the celebration of this progress.

1. There was too much of this element of glorification of Presbyterianism, of its polity and doctrine, of its fidelity to truth and of its triumphs. That it has wrought diligently and largely upon the temple of God is manifest. But all human works upon that temple are yet to be tried. We do not yet know what is of man and what is of God. All that is of gold, silver and precious stones will abide. All that is of wood, hay and stubble will be burned. Every man's work must be tried by fire. "The day shall declare it." An imposing temple in men's eyes may not

be such in the sight of God. A more modest and self-abasing strain would have better suited this summing up of results, which must all yet be exposed to the searching review of Him whom no outward appearance can deceive, and who must judge all things in the light of God.

2. There was especially an excessive glorification of Calvinism, as a complete and final expression of the truth of God. Among many addresses of which this was a marked feature, we listened to one of the most eloquent. It was indeed a pleasure to hear from the lips of so eminent a layman as the Hon. W. C. P. Breckenridge an address filled with noble thoughts, clothed in the finest language, and delivered with a grace and fervor which proved him to be a worthy inheritor of a name so eminent in the annals of the church. Nor could we find scarcely anything to object to in his forcible presentation of the great truth of the eternal and unconditioned sovereignty of God. We most heartily believe this to be not only a fundamental truth of Scripture, but, as the orator affirmed, a fact upon which the whole order of the world is based, and one to which Science gives increasing testimony. Our quarrel with Calvinism has never been for what it sees, but for what it fails to see, and for the quiet assumption that it sees all. God is indeed absolute sovereign, but His is not a mere sovereignty of power but of love. Calvinism has never fairly seen that love is at the heart of things in this system of the world. Hence this eloquent defender of it, and other speakers were obliged either to conceal the hard features of it or leave them wholly unexplained.

3. The special defect of the Presbyterian Church to which we referred in our last number was most apparent

in the Assembly. It signally fails to fulfill the purpose—which theoretically enters into its structure—of a court of Jesus Christ for the determination of matters of either doctrine or discipline. For purposes of discipline it is not only too cumbrous and unwieldy an instrument; its methods are human and not divine. The fitness of "the saints" (1 Cor. vi. 1) to judge controversies among brethren resides in the fact that the Spirit of God dwells in them, and also in the fact that they alone can feel the force of those principles of love and self-sacrifice and submission to injury which the gospel inculcates, and which, as truly as the principle of righteous dealing, should determine the issue. It is therefore unchristian for such a court to bind itself up by a system of technical rules, derived mainly from the forms of human jurisprudence, and which must limit the free action of the Holy Spirit upon their minds. The business of a court of Christ is to seek to know and declare His will. There were one or two notable instances in this Assembly which revealed how completely the formalities of "system" have displaced the rule of the Spirit, who should be recognized as the only arbiter and director in the Church of God.

Still more noticeable was this defect when the Assembly came to handle matters of doctrine. There was one very important matter, at least, of this character brought to its attention. We refer to the overture of the Presbytery of Nassau, which was printed in our last number. Here was a case in which a whole Presbytery unanimously declare that the statements of the Confession upon election and reprobation "go beyond the Word of God and are opposed

to the convictions and repugnant to the feelings of very many of our most worthy and thoughtful members," and an urgent request of the assembly to arrange for their revision. What does that body do? It gives up whole days to the thrashing over of old straw about Freedmen and Publication and Temperance and so on, and just toward the close, when part of the members had left and the rest were hurrying through the business in unseemly haste in order to leave, it passes, without dissent or even remark, a report from the Committee on Bills and Overtures that it would be inexpedient to take up this question at this time. Surely here was a question in which the conscience and Christian honor of at least the members of that Presbytery were concerned. It involved the question whether the Church's authorized statements on these points are true to the Word of God. There should have been prayerful inquiry, honest searching for the truth, and humble waiting upon God to know His mind and will. Surely all that we said in our last number about the church's need of a Jerusalem Chamber found here its verification. The General Assembly does not fulfil this function. Nor can there be any fulfilment of it so long as the rule of system takes the place in the Church of the rule of the Spirit of God.

4. Still another defect was the low estimate of the relation which that church sustains to the church at large in the unity of the one body, and the consequent lack of any earnest desire for church union. There was a great deal said about the conquest of this land and of the heathen world for Christ, and an entire ignoring of the conditions of this success as given in the Lord's last prayer—" that

they all may be one, that the world may believe." We were glad to find some recognition of this need in one or two of the popular addresses made by returned missionaries at the evening meetings. But there was no serious consideration of it in the councils of the Assembly. There is not only a fearful waste of energy and resources at home and abroad as the result of division. There is a weakness and vacillation before our foes. And there is a constant quenching of the Spirit in the body. He cannot and will not put forth His mighty energy for the world's conversion through a body, the members of which are dissevered and inharmonious, and out of organic connection one with another. Mere denominational comity is not enough. Not even co-operation could fully meet the case. The body is *one*, and it is an organism. And it is only in connection with a church that realizes this that He will make His glory known in the eyes of the nations, and all flesh shall see His salvation.

RESURRECTION AND EVOLUTION.

Notwithstanding the condemnation of Dr. Woodrow by the Southern General Assembly, the doctrine of evolution is likely to be increasingly accepted by enlightened Christian teachers as marking out the method by which God has been unfolding His plan of life in Creation, up to the production of man in His own image. The Bible, however, teaches that this process of developing a creature who should be a fit vehicle of His eternal life and the heir of His wide dominions has not yet reached its final stage. The "earthy"

man is only an image in clay of that splendid figure which is to stand on the summit of Creation. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither can corruption inherit incorruption." The true "Image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation" (Col. i. 15), is the Risen Man. As such all its wide realms, and all its potent forces are now subject unto Him (Eph. i. 20--23). St. Paul in the first chapter of his epistle to the Colossians intimates that the region of His life and power lies specially on what to us is the invisible side of Creation (vs. 16--18). The visible is also His rightful possession, although here His sovereignty is disputed by "the prince of this cosmos" (Eph. ii. 2) who is yet to be cast out. That there are two sides to this created system, the visible and the invisible, is equally a truth of Science. And that man stands on the border line which separates the visible from the invisible, the material from the spiritual, the temporal from the eternal, is also a fact of Science and the first postulate of Metaphysics. He belongs to both systems. His body of flesh and blood ties him to this material system. But he has a spiritual nature which overleaps its boundaries. What wonder, therefore, that the *conatus* of his being should be to struggle out of the limitations of its present form into an environment of things spiritual and eternal! Scripture teaches that this is his destiny. He is to take on a form of manhood which is forever superior to and regnant over this created system, and into whose composition all its finer and subtler elements shall enter. The doctrine of evolution, while it may not affirm, does not exclude the possibility of such a higher form of humanity. It encourages the hope. While the doctrine that there is a God requires this; for

without it, this vast and splendid fabric of Creation is a monstrous failure—crowned only with a ghastly, grinning skeleton. It is not too much to say that the testimony of evolution is more than negative as to this point. The plan of life which it delineates seems to require the final production of a perfect form of which all previous imperfect forms are a dim prophecy,—an imperishable structure, "eternal in the heavens," of which all perishable houses of clay are the rude forecasts. And there is no ground on which it can object that this higher structure may not be framed out of, and be adapted to, that region of unseen substances and forces which it knows to be the most real and substantial part of creation. Such seems to be the plain prediction of even nature. And such is the definite promise of Scripture; such the pledge given to man in the resurrection of our Brother-Man, Jesus Christ, from the dead. An agnostic Science, wise apparently concerning things seen, but blind to things unseen, declares that such a change is impossible,—that the record of the resurrection is a fable. It throws the pall of endless night over this splendid prospect opened up in the Bible for us sons of men who are called to be the sons of God. But to it we answer back with joyful confidence: "But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. * * If there is a natural body there is also a spiritual body. So also it is written. The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam, a life-giving spirit. Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is of heaven. As is

the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

A HELL FOR SINNERS.

We have been called upon in this magazine to denounce that view of God and of His dealings with sinful men which assumes that He has reserved for endless torment the countless masses of mankind who have died in their sins, and to expose its falsity in the light of the gospel of the resurrection. In doing this it has been a constant anxiety lest this relief from the blind terror of the old doctrine would lead men to abuse the grace of God. The doctrine of future punishment has been so associated in their minds with the creed-doctrine of an endless hell that we need not wonder if exposure of its untruth would lead them to think lightly of sin and its terrible consequences. And therefore we desire again to remind all our readers that we have not the least sympathy with trifling views of sin or of its evil and bitter fruits. We ask them to consider that its future punishment cannot be a trivial thing when it is described in such terms as the Bible constantly employs. Is there nothing alarming in its constant use of the terms "death" "destruction" "perishing" to set forth the perdition of ungodly men? Can it be a light thing to "depart into eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"? to be "cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth"? Is it noth-

ing to "lose the soul", or to have both body and soul destroyed in hell? It is true, as we have frequently shown, that these tremendous perils do not await a distant judgment day; they lie this side of resurrection from the dead. But they are enormous dangers. They involve incalculable suffering and loss. Can a man expect to go into this "fire that cannot be quenched," and escape its torment, or experience its dissolving energy with no loss? Must not sinful men expect that this ordeal of death and hell will leave them stripped and naked, despoiled of their richest treasures, maimed in their being and personality, their barque of life ship-wrecked and its precious cargo lost, and themselves forced to begin the life restored to them at resurrection far down the scale? And is it nothing to be banished to an age-long destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power before they can again hear the voice of the Son of God and live? We have seen that this destruction *precedes* resurrection. But is an age-long bondage in the realms of death and hell nothing to be shunned? The voice of hope did at last reach the "spirits in prison which formerly were disobedient when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah". But was their captivity in this prison-house for more than two thousand years of no account? And is the "resurrection of judgment", which is all that sinful men are promised, a blessing to be compared with the "resurrection of life"? Those who receive Christ are said to be at once transferred from this category of judgment to life eternal. Is this no gain? And are there no disadvantages and hazards which those must incur to whom a long-delayed resurrection may at last open the

prison-doors, in the fact that even this harvest of a new life must be according to the law of sowing and reaping and "To every seed his own body." Surely there is nothing in our doctrine, when understood, to lead any man to continue in sin that grace may abound, or to take the risks of the future, seeing that the future is even more charged than the present with penalty for sin, and that it never can open any other door to eternal life than the way of crucifixion and death to the old man which is now open. There is a veritable destruction, a loss of the soul, a torment in hell, a long captivity in its outer darkness, a loss of the heritage and crown of life, which can only be escaped here and now. And there is a present salvation in Christ, a union with Him in eternal life which is incapable of death, a fellowship in His triumph, a joint inheritance with Him of all things, and a share in His ever widening administrations of power and blessing which can only be won here and now. And we beg that no one of our readers will think lightly of the awful dangers to be now shunned or of the glory to be now gained, according as they shall receive or reject Him as their Saviour and Lord.

And we who are Christians need also to remember the many warning words which He has left on record for us. Are we aware that most of the passages which are relied upon as proofs of the endless torment of the wicked are warnings addressed to us? His words about hell-fire in St. Matthew xviii. 8, and St. Mark ix. 43–50 are instances of a class of words spoken in private to His disciples. They teach them that if they would save their lives whole and unimpaired for the service of God and the joys

of His kingdom, they must now be willing to sacrifice whatever defiles them in heart and body, and whatever hinders the full and free surrender of themselves to the call of duty and the demands of conscience. We who are so apt to be fond of the approval of men, of peace and honor and ease in this present world, who dread so much to be scorned and repulsed are here told that if we would save our lives we must now be content to lose them, if we would be Christ's disciples we must now be willing to forsake all that we have, and to count not our lives, much less our reputations and emoluments dear unto us, if they hinder us in any way from full obedience to His commands. Surely it is no light matter that we stand in danger of being "saved so as by fire," and with the suffering of loss. No wood, hay and stubble service will be of any value to us in the day of trial. Recollect that St. Paul's words, "For our God is a consuming fire," are addressed to us. They do not read, "For God out of Christ is a consuming fire." It is God *in* Christ—Our God—who must thus consume out of our lives all that cannot stand the test of His approval. And, therefore, "We, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve Him acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. For *our* God is a consuming fire."

CHRISTIAN UNION.

Faint as the possibility of it may now appear, yet it is within the range of the imagination to conceive some powerful motive whose working would hasten the process. A

great sentiment may take possession of Protestant Christendom which would imperatively demand that all artificial restrictions be dropped in the presence of some great danger. It may be that, beneath the present desire for unity, there is working some instinctive sense of impending evil, which will try men's souls as the barbarian invasions of which we read in history. Under such circumstances we should realize that our strength lay in union; we should get down from the pedestals on which we have been posing, we should abandon our stilts and stand upon our feet as men. We should then be convinced that the strongest bond which can unite us is our common humanity for which Christ died—the only basis for the fellowship of Christian love.

To a certain extent it is possible that on the missionary field, in the presence of a dominant heathenism, a similar motive may lead to some form of co-operation, some *modus vivendi,* which will diminish or neutralize the evils of division. It seems plain that we ought not to propagate in foreign lands the rivalries, the intrigues, the calumnies to which we have grown accustomed at home. Otherwise we must trust to the large mindedness of the heathen world to make allowance for our deficiencies in Christian fellowship.—*The Independent.*

CHARGES TO BE MET.

In the recent decision of the Presbytery in our case no charges were preferred and no action was taken affecting our ministerial standing. Practically, however, the action

amounts to a decision that no minister who denies that all the dead of mankind—except the elect body of Christ—have been doomed to everlasting torment, and who teaches that there is gospel for all in the provision to raise all from the dead, is worthy to be recognized as a minister of Christ in the Presbyterian church. By this action we hold that that church must answer before the court of the universal church and before God, the Judge of all, to these charges. It stands charged,—

1. With marring and perverting the gospel by the denial of this vital feature of it, that there is hope for mankind at large in the provision for a general resurrection of the dead.

2. With the substitution of the rule of the Standards in the church for the rule of the Spirit and Word of God.

3. With the denial of the principle of liberty of conscience and of private judgment upon which that church itself is based.

4. With holding her ministers to a strict allegiance to a confession some of whose formulas are no longer a candid and honest expression of her faith.

5. With thus forcing them into a position of intellectual dishonesty which damages their spiritual strength and life.

6. With quenching the Spirit, by assuming that He has nothing more to teach the church beyond her Standards, and by putting under a ban those who attempt to "prophesy" outside these limits.

7. With obstructing the church's progress toward "the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God" by forbidding progress beyond her boundaries.

8. With delaying the conversion of the world by thus delaying the unity of His church for which Jesus prayed, and which He declares to be essential in order that the world may believe.

RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY.

A flagrant vice of controversy is the imputation of moral wrong to views in ethics or religion that antagonize our fixed and cherished beliefs. Even if the adverse opinions be erroneous, error honestly held is not guilt. But a heated contest for victory, which is no nearer than when you began the siege, easily runs into a persuasion that your stout opponent is not only tricky in argument, but is furthermore a wickedly confirmed disbeliever of what you claim to be some vital truth. Yet aside from the pending dispute, you may know him to be your equal in manly virtues. His position may not be sound; its practical results may not be entirely wholesome. That is unfortunate; but an intellectual mistake is not in itself a sin. It is a great self-mastery—and all too rare—for a keen controversialist to hold fast the charity which concedes an honest mind and conscience to the party of the other side. If he plainly and palpably is not this, by explicit proof, then let fly a reasonable measure of moral indignation at the fraud. But if this proof be only a personal aversion to his doctrine or himself, the indignation thus expended is not moral, but unmoral: not permanently harmful to its object, but surely damaging to the manliness of its subject, and to whatever

cause he may champion. It is every way a pitiful wastefulness to be angry at anything but real sin. For people to lose their temper or their Christian truthfulness in contending over moral and religious issues, practical or theoretical, is a serious offense against reason, common sense and the spirit and precept of Christ.—*Dr. Joseph Parker.*

THE "NEW DEPARTURE."

The *Independent* of June 7th contains an article upon this subject, by the Rev. J. E. Rankin, D. D., which it especially endorses as expressing its own views and that of nine-tenths of its readers. It starts out with the assertion:

> The New Departure does not claim to have the Bible as its authority. It is its own authority. It is founded on the speculations of men, has no shadow of authority in the words of the Saviour, and makes the author of the Bible deny his own utterances. If the Epistle to the Romans, for example—where this whole subject is thoroughly discussed—teaches the probability or the possibility of a preaching of Christ in another world, the common mind will discover it and believe it; and if there is no such teaching there, the common mind will reject the whole theory as of man and not of God. Nor will this common mind be much moved, even if all the colleges and theological seminaries in the land rise up to greet this New Departure at its coming, and spread for it tables of hospitality. It was asked in the day of our Lord: "Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed on Him?" Still the common people kept on hearing him gladly.

Now upon this we have to remark that the New De-

parture the writer has in mind is a very different form of the larger hope from the one we teach. We do not believe in probation after death in the prevalent form of that opinion. But we do most profoundly believe in *probation after resurrection.* And inasmuch as death and resurrection, as acts in the Divine economy, are as wide apart as the poles, so there must be a wide difference in these two modes of stating and defending the larger hope. Dr. Rankin does great injustice to the Andover school, the weak point of whose position we have ourselves often pointed out, when he asserts that "they do not claim the Bible as their authority." On the other hand he knows very well that they constantly profess that the general tone and spirit of the Bible is with them, and that particular passages must be interpreted in the light of its general teaching. Moreover he knows that the New Departure appeals confidently to special texts, and that one text, 1 Peter iii. 19–21, with its parallel in iv. 6, so distinctly teaches not only the "probability or the possibility," but the *fact* "of a preaching of Christ in another world," that not only the consensus of catholic interpretation admits it, but even "the common mind" refuses to be deceived by the bungling attempts of modern exegetes to twist away the words of the apostle from their obvious meaning.

But leaving the Andover school to defend themselves as they may, so far as our view is included under this head of "New Departure," we "not only claim to have the Bible as authority;" we were compelled to adopt it against lifelong prejudices and convictions and in the face of worldly interests, because the whole plan of revelation requires it,

and we must either accept it or be disloyal to the Bible. We have repeatedly shown that the Andover teaching is scripturally weak, because it interposes a long delay between death—the wages of sin—and the sinner's sentence and punishment. It fails to see that the definite penalty for sin must be inflicted on the sinner *before* the grace of God can again take up his case, and that therefore whatever hope may visit him in the future cannot be connected with his loss of life in death, but with his recovery to life through resurrection. If the doctrine of the larger hope were only thus stated as not a probation after death, but after restored life; if the death-state had been rightly regarded as the penal state, just as the Bible views it, and all hope for men ruined by sin and lost in death had been connected with the provision to raise them out of death, each in their own time and order, and as heirs of life, or as still under judgment, according to character, then not only would this "New Departure" have planted its feet on Scripture ground; it would be seen that it is the very cream of all that God has been speaking by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began—the very essence of that gospel which was to be glad tidings of great joy to all people. Nothing makes us more indignant than these oft-repeated assertions that what is known as the wider hope is "a mere speculation," "without any warrant in Scripture." Whatever may be true of the defective forms that hope has taken on, because of the blind adherence of most of its advocates to the tradition that the sinner's judgment-day and future punishment lie beyond his resurrection, sure we are that when once the student of God's Word is enlightened to perceive the redemptive value

it puts upon resurrection, its pages become aglow with this hope, and this principle is seen to be as necessary to its correct understanding as is the law of gravitation to the movements of the solar system. At the very basis of revelation lies God's covenant promise, thrice-repeated, to bless all the families of the earth through a chosen seed. Dr. Rankin's school is continually looking forward to some distant period, when the gospel shall be everywhere obeyed, as the time when this promise shall be realized. In their view the countless generations of the dead were not in view in the promise. Not even this wonder-working God, who could fill the heavens with unnumbered stars, and whose word to Abraham was, "So shall thy seed be," can do anything for the dead; whereas the whole of Scripture turns upon its promise of a redemptive provision for the dead. This promise to bless all nations was to be made good through their recovery from the death they must suffer to another life. He who fails to see that the God who wounds can also heal, and that He who kills can also make alive, and that because of these secret wonders of His power and grace, all nations shall yet rejoice with His people (Deut. xxxii. 39–43) has missed the only key to the right knowledge of the Bible. Dr. Rankin complaisantly appeals to the epistle to the Romans as destitute of even a hint that there is hope of redemption after death. Has he never read in the fifth chapter of "the justification of life" which has come "upon all men" by the righteousness of one? And that this gift is of such a character that where sin abounded to the condemnation and death of all "grace did *much more* abound?" Can the old Calvanistic limita-

tion of this grace be made to possibly consist with this "much more?" Or has he never read in the eleventh chapter how the cast-off branches of apostate Israel are to be graffed in again, as "life from the dead?" "and so all Israel shall be saved," and that God hath concluded both Jew and Gentile in unbelief, "that He might have mercy upon all." Are the dead of Israel no part of these cast-off branches who are to be restored? To deny that they are is to deny Hosea xiii, and Ezekiel xxxvii, and Jeremiah xxxi, and a host of such passages. No, we cast back the charge in the teeth of our accusers, and declare that the men who deny that there is any hope for the dead in and after resurrection do not understand the Scriptures. They are perverters of its promises and its hopes. Under the self-delusion that they alone understand the Gospel and are "evangelical," they deny the first principle of the Gospel, by denying every element of grace and hope, except to the elect, in its provision that "all shall be made alive." Under a conceit that they alone are zealous for the truth and honor of our Lord Jesus Christ, they strip Him of the very honor with which God crowned Him when He raised Him from the dead that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. We give all these brethren notice—and we do it, we trust, not in a spirit of strife and vainglory, but because we love them and would save them from their ignorance and error, that we do not propose any longer to stand on the defensive and quietly submit to be told that we are mere "speculators" and are not only without warrant from Scripture, but are unwilling to submit our own judgments to it. If anyone wants to know what support we find in Scripture for

our views, let them read our recent book on "The Fire of God's Anger." That book is a Scriptural argument from beginning to end. Among the various criticisms made upon it in newspapers and letters, not one has given anything like a Scriptural refutation. And for the very good reason that none is possible, provided the attempt be made along the line in which the argument is presented. It is easy enough to quote certain passages from the New Testament which seem opposed. But when it is seen that redemption through resurrection is an underlying principle in the Old Testament, and that the New can be properly approached only after that principle is acknowledged, then these apparently decisive passages are seen to wear a different aspect. Dr. Rankin makes a good deal of the consent of "the common mind" as ruling out the larger hope. Has he never heard how wofully the common mind in our Saviour's day was mistaken as to all that Moses and the prophets had written "how that the Christ must first suffer and be raised again from the dead?" And is there no possibility that the common mind in our day may be warped by tradition and false education, and "know not the Scriptures neither the power of God?" We say that such teachers as he have been perverting and hiding the gospel of the resurrection from the common mind. And yet, even in spite of long ages of misrepresentation and ignorance of this gospel, the common mind is waking up to perceive that there are larger purposes of grace in God's book than our modern scribes and doctors of the law have told them of. The churches of Christendom are to-day honeycombed with these larger views and hopes. The Spirit of Christ in His people is proving too strong for these

long-imposed fetters, and some of these leaders who have been keeping them in this bondage will some day find it out to their sorrow.

As to Dr. Rankin's slighting way of disposing of the just demand of the heathen upon the old orthodoxy, "What of our ancestors?" we have only to say that his ignorance of the foundation principle in the plan of redemption makes him ignorant of the true motive for modern missions. If that motive be to snatch a few of the heathen from the torments of an endless hell, then indeed does the gospel become to them no gospel, but a message of despair. And we need not wonder that few of them believe it. But the true motive is to announce to them the fact that God has raised His Son Jesus Christ from the dead to effect the world's redemption from the power of sin and death,—to invite them to receive in their own souls this great deliverance,—an earnest of future glory,—and as preparing them to take part with Christ in His administrations of grace and power through which even the dead shall hear His voice and live. Hope for themselves and also for their dead is thus seen to be made dependent upon their personal faith in and obedience to Christ who must first gather His first fruits from off these dark fields of death before they can yield their future harvests. Here is indeed a gospel—glad tidings of great joy. But it is one that brings no relief to men so long as they continue in sin, nor no hope for their dead except as the living consent to now yield themselves unto Christ, that they may with Him be baptized for the dead. For in the mystery of this great plan there must be a "church of the first born" before the salvation of the later born. A chosen

seed must become the channel of blessing to their brethren who have died without the sight, and who, by reason of sin, have lost their life and heritage. Here at last is a motive for missions which shall one day set the heathen world ablaze with a triumphant gospel.

EXTRACT FROM THE REV. CANON LIDDON.

Now, that the soul of man survives the body at death might be inferred as from other considerations quite independent of revelation so especially from the observed law, as it is called, of the conservation of force or energy in the physical universe. We are told, on apparently solid grounds, that when a human body dies and decays there takes place in reality, not a cessation, but only a transformation of energy. The organic compounds which made up and sustained the living human frame are merely resolved by death into new combinations, which may again be partly taken up into other and living forms, and thus the force or energy of the human body not only does not cease at death, it undergoes neither diminution nor increase, it is after death what it was before death, only it has entered upon the new conditions which it has itself gradually brought about; and when death has taken place this energy is already at work in modifying and transforming such conditions still further. This estimate of death from the purely physical point of view assumes—and we need not dispute the assumption—that there is no such thing observable—I do not say no such thing possible—as the

annihilation of once-existing energy, and it points to the fact that chemistry is perfectly able to trace after death the persistent action of the various compounds which have sustained a human body during life. Be it so. But, if this law of the conservation of energy or force is food for one department of our being, why not for another? Is there then no energy, properly speaking, except that of the substances which are known to chemistry? Are not thought, will, love truly energy? Are they not just as much energy as any energy that we can identify with oxygen, or hydrogen or nitrogen, or carbon? And, if thought and affection and will are energy, what, pray, becomes of them at death? Chemistry knows what becomes of their physical companions. Give chemistry time and opportunity, and, when a man has been dead for a year, it will tell you upon analysis what each of the physical forces which one year ago combined to sustain his living body is now doing. But what can chemistry tell you about his thought, his affection, his will? And, if these are—as surely they are—properly energy, have they ceased? Have they ceased only because they are unrepresented in the transformation to the physical forces which were for years their partners? Surely to suppose that they are extinct is to reject this admitted law of the conservation of energy, to reject it for no better reason than that for the moment we are unable to verify its applicability to a particular detail—a proceeding which would certainly be deemed irrational if nothing beyond a physical fact or a physical doctrine, were at stake. In this way some minds outside the Christian faith might fairly be led up to the great conviction, to which so much else points that is independent of revelation—the conviction that the spiritual nature of

man survives the death of his body. If it is reasonable to think that physical energy does not perish at death, but only takes new forms, then it is, at least, equally reasonable to believe in a like survival of spiritual energy.

But here there arises the momentous question: How, or in what shape, will this surviving spiritual energy be preserved? Will the living spirit, like the body, be dissolved? Will the spiritual forces which made it what it was to us survive, entering perhaps into new associations, new combinations, new beings? Will what was strictly personal in the living man have ceased to be? Will his ever enduring thought, and love, and resolve sink back into, and blend with, some supposed ocean of universal life in which they will endure for ever, though without consciousness of their separation from any other created existence? This, since Spinoza's day, has been a widely accepted form of the doctrine of the immortality of man; and it is taken for granted—sometimes only half consciously in too many minds, and types of mind among us—to be ignored when the general subject is discussed. Remark, then, my brethren, this vital difference between physical force, or energy, and spiritual force. Physical force exists independently of the living subject to whose life it belongs or contributes. A gas is just as much a gas whether it enters into the composition of a human being, or is detained in a jar in a chemist's shop; but spiritual force has no existence whatever, so far as we know, apart from the seat of being, or the person whose force it is. Thought, love, resolve—these cannot be treated like a gas; they cannot be detached from the soul into whose life they enter, and secured, packed away in some laboratory for ex-

periments in moral science. And therefore, it follows that, if at death the thinking, loving, resolving subject or person ceases to be, through his supposed absorption into some ocean of universal life, or otherwise, then his thought and his love and his resolve cease to be simultaneously, and the vision which would represent them as enduring when the human personality which is the basis of their being has already perished is indeed a dream—it is an airy compound of forces and of sentiments to which nothing can really answer in the world of fact. The immortality which is held to consist in absorption of the personal soul into the infinite life of God is, when we examine it closely, only another name for practical annihilation. The only real immortality of the personal being is a personal immortality; and a doctrine of immortality which would destroy the separate consciousness, which would break down the walls of the thinking, loving, resolving person, does not the less annihilate that person because it softens the process by proclaiming his absorption into the universal life."

"This," perhaps some of you will say, "is only a question for the metaphysician." On the contrary, my brethren, be well assured it is eminently a question for the human heart. What is the thought which more than any other takes possession of us when death has separated us from one whom we have loved dearly in life? Is it not: "Shall I see him ever again? Shall I know him? Will he know me?" Who that has ever loved and lost can doubt it? And what must be the answer to this question? If the phrases are true which paint the surviving spirit of man as losing the consciousness of personal existence from absorption into universal life—if this supposition were

true, there would be nothing to recognize, there would be nobody to recognize. Recognizer and recognized would alike have lost all that marks off and that constitutes individual being during this supposed process of absorption. We might as well altogether have ceased to be.

> That each, who seems a separate whole,
> Should move his rounds, and fusing all
> The skirts of self again, should fall,
> Remerging in the general soul,
>
> Is faith as vague as all unsweet;
> Eternal form shall still divide
> The eternal soul from all beside;
> And I shall know him when we meet.

NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

INGERSOLL'S REPLY.—No well instructed Christian will be in the least disturbed by the renewed assault upon the Bible, and the God it reveals, made by Mr. Ingersoll in his reply to Mr. Gladstone, as published in the June *North American.* It is mainly a re-statement of the shallow criticisms he has been making for years past—criticisms which reveal how utterly this arch sceptic has failed to comprehend the divine scheme of the world and of human history as outlined on the inspired pages. Most of his objections to the character of Jehovah as drawn in the Old Testament can be made with equal force against the power that makes for order and righteousness in nature, with whose administration Mr. Ingersoll seems to get along through the world very comfortably, and in whose bible—science—he reposes such confidence and hope. It must, however, be con-

fessed that no satisfactory answer can be made to many of his criticisms from the old standpoints. Orthodoxy never has nor never can reconcile such stern and cruel facts as the drowning of the world by the flood, the dispossession and slaughter of the Cainaanites, the killing of the four hundred prophets of Baal, on the ordinary theory that the hell into which such evil generations of men passed when swept off the earth for their wickedness, is endless. But on the principle that He who kills can also make alive, and that the death of depraved masses of mankind out of their low order of humanity may be a part of a necessary process by which they may be wrought over into a higher, and that even upon the night of such "spirits in prison" the morning star arose when Jesus Christ was raised that He might be Lord both of the dead and the living, then the whole history wears a different aspect. Neither Dr. Field nor Mr. Gladstone seem to be aware of the magnificent gems of promise and of hope hidden in the rough and rocky chambers of these Old testament Scriptures. Hence neither has been able to make a complete and satisfactory defence. But let no Christian lose heart. Such a defence can be made. All that is needed is to get below these surface records of God's dealings with mankind, upon which Ingersoll loves to linger, to the heart of what He has spoken by the mouth of all His prophets since the world began. To one who understands the gospel of the resurrection of the dead the whole of these dark records of God's dealing with mankind in the past shines with a new light, and the future is suffused with a new hope. He sees how even these remote times contribute something to that song of the ages whose full chorus was heard by the enraptured John as he stood at the point where all the past was summed up; "Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages. Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest." It has been the supreme mistake and folly of defenders of the faith to assume that in this song and worship of all nations, the nations of the

dead can have no part. And so they have deprived themselves of the very weapon by which all such adversaries as Ingersoll are forever silenced.

Mrs. L. Ormiston Chant, an English lady who lectured recently in this city before large and deeply interested audiences of her own sex upon temperance and social purity, has also been lecturing in Boston upon the "Progress of Religious Thought in England." Among other things she claimed that very few persons of average intelligence accept any longer the doctrine of a punishment that is without end and without hope.

That is a most just remark of Mr. Mozoomdar of India, who has been writing in the *Christian Union* upon the problem of the Conversion of India:

"We require a Christianity that is not ashamed to learn while it teaches, and that, in undertaking to reform India, shall be itself reformed also."

"HERESY" IN SCOTLAND.—The London *Christian World* says: The New Theology is certainly not at a discount in the city of Glasgow. Whenever Dr. Walter Smith, of Edinburgh, or the Rev. D. Macrae, of Dundee, or other ministers of equally broad views preach in St. Mungo's city, there are always crowded congregations to listen to them. Principal Caird's attractive powers were well illustrated on Sunday afternoon, when hundreds had to be refused admission to the University Chapel. This generation is more enlightened in the knowledge of God, His word and ways, than were the men of the second, the fourth, or the seventeenth century, and competent to revise their ideas."

UNFAIR.—It is not fair in some of the papers to speak of our withdrawal from the Presbyterian Church as due to our endeavor to force upon it a doctrine of future probation. It was

due to the fact that we reject its doctrine that the unjust dead are raised out of death and hell in order to be judged and sentenced again to the same pit of woe "to suffer most grievous and unspeakable torments in body and soul, without intermission, in hell-fire forever." We say that this is a fundamental misconception of the purpose of God in providing that all who died in Adam should receive another gift of life in Christ. We say that those who never heard the Gospel have never had probation under it. They came into the world "condemned already." The term "future probation" is usually applied to a theory which supposes that men who die in their sins have a prolongation of trial after death—that their judgment is delayed and sentence deferred until after this future probation. We teach that the ungodly are *now* under condemnation, that the sentence cannot be delayed, that they must go down to death and hell, that they must suffer in that prison-house the full consequences of their sins, and that it is only after judgment is thus rendered, the sentence executed, the righteousness of God vindicated and the law satisfied, that provision has been made by which the grace of God can take up their case again in the only way possible—through their resurrection from the dead.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

A Presbyterian minister writes to us as follows in reference to the recent action upon our "case."

"There is something which it seems to me deserves rebuke of a stern kind, namely, this tendency to cry "no eternal punishment, no need of salvation!" "No everlasting torment—then let us eat, drink, and be merry!" Such persons are well aware that they would not dare to plead the "larger hope" in extenuation of any one sin, and why should such talk deter us for a moment? Shall we refrain talking about the Fatherhood of God, because mankind have a universal notion

that fathers are *indulgent?* Shall we refrain from reading to others the story of the woman taken in adultery, from the fear that it will tend to remove the barriers which restrain sinners in this direction? Shall we be so "prudent" as to keep silence concerning the fullness and freeness of divine forgiveness for fear some will abuse it to the accumulation of yet more sins as things so easily disposed of? And in the name of all our boasted veneration for scriptural dictum, shall we hesitate to declare all God's counsel concerning sin and righteousness and judgment to come, and resurrection too, for fear some babbler, whose very words convict him of insincerity, cries, "I have another chance hereafter, so why bother about repentance now?"

In this same line of thought, it seems to me sometimes that sinners, in condemning their fellow sinners, have taken pains to say far more concerning God's "retributive justice," etc., than He has cared to say Himself, as well as to suppress much concerning His conquering righteousness that He has proclaimed. They remind me of Victor Hugo's policeman, Javert, rebuking his superior, the mayor, for his laxity in administering the penal code! And so what no doubt is meant sincerely enough for great circumspection in the contemplation of these solemn themes becomes practical uppishness. What precious underlings we are—to be afraid that divine wisdom has let out rather more secrets than it is best, in our judgment, for the world, and even the Church, to know."

A Presbyterian elder writes:

"I do not see how the question of a revision of the Confession is ever coming up for consideration except it is occasioned by some such incident as your case affords. The sooner something of the kind occurs the better for the Church."

A Presbyterian pastor from the interior of this State sends us the following:

Dear Brother Baker: You are now excluded from the Presbyterian pulpit, but it is perfectly allowable for you to take a seat in the pews. As I am not as yet dismissed from the pulpit, permit me to preach a little sermon to you. The text is as follows:

"Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp bearing his reproach." Heb. xiii. 13.

"Going forth" is essential to the Christian life. Abraham was "called to go out;" the chosen people, "brought out from the house of bondage;" the disciples of Christ "forsook all and followed him;" the Church of Christ is the *ecclesia*, "called forth" from the world.

Sometimes the call is to go forth and separate oneself from a corrupt form of worship; thus the tabernacle of the congregation was removed outside the camp, because the people were debasing themselves with the worship of the golden calf, and thither the cloudy pillar descended and spiritual worshippers resorted. Thus also Luther went forth; so likewise have the Quakers, the Puritans, and others, signified their protest in behalf of a purer worship.

Sometimes God calls us to go forth toward a higher and truer form of faith, of which the entire argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews furnishes the best illustration. The original call of Christianity was to occupy a (technically speaking) heterodox position. It required the advocacy of fresh truth in distinction from the out-worn tenets of ecclesiasticism. "And this word, 'Yet once more,' signifyeth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain."

Think it not strange that you find yourself "without the camp." The process of going forth and re-establishing the truth must be repeated in every age. "Jesus heard that they had cast him out: and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" This is the true and final test. "Let us go forth unto him, bearing his reproach." If in your present position you have an unshaken faith in the Son of God; if you are bearing the reproach of a more Christlike creed, then it is far better, under the circumstances, that you are without the camp than within; it was maintaining a false peace within; you are enjoying a true peace without.

Your case stands unique in the history of trials for heresy. It was not a trial, in the technical sense. Claiming the right to diverge from the standards and to agitate for their revision, you stood self-arraigned before the Presbytery. Nothing can be more creditable and more commendable to all concerned than the spirit which prevailed; and yet, with the bitterness commonly accompanying such affairs eliminated, the impression left upon the mind formulates itself into the instinctive conviction that a mistake, approaching the proportions of a blunder, has been committed. Only those who adhere slavishly to a dogmatic system can regard this action with complacency. If from those who voted against you there were to be deducted all who did so

with secret misgivings as to the rightfulness of this entire procedure, doubtless the majority in this case would be considerably reduced. But if this be God's way of advancing His cause and leading eventually toward a purer and simpler creed, why should you complain if you find yourself, first with a small minority, and then, without the camp?

Notice, too, how hard it is to sweeten any such controversy as this. It has been done in this case probably with a larger measure of success than ever before. Very much what partisan politics is to patriotism or the clashing of schools of medicine is to the cure of the disease, such is the relation which these dogmatic controversies sustain to religion. We must rise into and live in a higher air or the religious life becomes asphyxiated, and the more so oftentimes in proportion as orthodoxy so-called is adhered to. With sincere regard,

Fraternally Yours.

A professor in a theological seminary writes concerning "The Fire of God's Anger."

My Dear Mr. Baker:—I have read your book far enough to be able to give my impressions, and I have been much impressed by it. In the chapter "Eternal Fire" I found what struck me most forcibly. What you say about man's relation to the world and its forces and the inferences therefrom, are what I have felt for some time, and also, as you say, that Theology seemed to ignore it all, and look at man only as a spiritual being. You know, no doubt that this is one of the strong points of Froebel's philosophy, in his "Education of Man," as that philosophy underlies his kindergarten system; and its recognition of truths given in this fact, makes it with its intelligent votaries a religion almost. Your use of scientific or cosmic truths is in the line of what many feel, that Theology can never be what it ought, till it take in and assimilate the best of science. I cannot express myself well or fully, because my head is tired and also because I have not yet learned to compose anything abstract on the type-writer. I felt all the while I was reading that the book has not at all received the recognition it is worth, or what is more, the importance the subject demands. How puerile most men's thinking is, in grooves of education and tradition!